



# SADC Policy Framework on Care and Support for Teaching and Learning

## CSTL Child and Youth Agency Framework

Developing children's agency in and through education

### ABSTRACT

A planning framework for empowering children and youth – in and through education – to be active and engaged citizens contributing to inclusive, sustainable development

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## Introduction

Africa's *Agenda 2063* documents the rights-based sustainable development vision shared by all Member States of the African Union: to unlock the full potential of the continent's greatest wealth – its people – through the realisation of their rights, so that they may establish and sustain peaceful, inclusive and prosperous families, communities and countries.

Realising this vision depends on ensuring that every person, especially the most vulnerable and excluded, have agency, that is, the knowledge, power, capacity and opportunity to fulfil their responsibilities as actively engaged citizens.

Member States have committed to achieving sustainable development of the continent by investing in measures that will develop the agency of all – especially the most marginalised – to participate in social, economic and political processes, which is key to lasting personal and national development.

Moving forward, children are the custodians of this long-term vision. Therefore, achieving and sustaining development depends on the meaningful engagement of children now as responsible, active citizens, and in the future as responsible parents, workers and taxpayers, employers, political leaders and administrators of capable, developmental states. It is their civic responsibility to drive and sustain inclusive development, economic prosperity, social justice, peace and good governance, and sustainable environments. If they do not, any gains made will be short-lived and the vision of *Agenda 2063* will not be realised.

**Sustainable development therefore requires that all children have the agency – the knowledge, skills, capacities and opportunities, as well as the associated rights – necessary to fulfil their civic responsibilities.**

All relevant sustainable development instruments recognise children as the custodians of the continent's vision, and that children can only be agents of change if empowered to do so. They therefore call on Member States to strengthen their education systems to provide universal, quality, inclusive education to all children – especially the most marginalised and vulnerable – to build the required knowledge, competencies and capacities to fulfil their civic responsibilities; in other words, to provide education for developing agency.

**It is therefore a rights-based, sustainable development imperative that all education systems be strengthened to provide inclusive, quality education to develop the agency of all children.**

This *CSTL Child and Youth Agency Framework (CYAF)* starts with an analysis of the compelling call and commitment by Member States of the African Union for transformation of the continent's education systems and the realisation of children's civil and political rights as the foundational building blocks of the African Renaissance. Thereafter, it examines how this imperative can be met. It does so by drawing together the legal and developmental responsibilities on education systems prescribed by international and regional treaties and instruments, along with the wealth of evidence on the characteristics and features of a 21st century education system needs to have in order to ensure the realisation of children's civil and political rights, specifically the right to participate. The framework then seeks to translate these various requirements into appropriate policy statements aligned to the *SADC Policy Framework for Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL PF)*.

## Purpose of this framework

This *CSTL Child and Youth Agency Framework (CYAF)* has been developed as an addendum to support the *SADC Policy Framework for Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL PF)* by advocating for the review and effective transformation of education systems to achieve children's agency.

The SADC Member States have committed to transforming their education systems into vehicles of inclusive growth that can drive sustainable development within the regional bloc. The CSTL PF provides a road map to guide the policy review and reform process. It does so through several policy statements that recognise the barriers to inclusive education in the region, as well as the measures and outcomes that education systems should take and achieve to overcome the barriers preventing the inclusion and full participation of vulnerable children in education.

All ministries have committed to addressing the identified barriers to inclusive education to ensure that education is the driver of inclusive, rights-based development in the region. The CSTL PF identifies one of the key barriers as the poor/outdated quality of education, especially the education as taught and received by vulnerable and marginalised children. All Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States are required to address this barrier by improving the quality of education so that it is relevant and provides children with the knowledge, skills and capacities they need to be active and engaged citizens who will drive and sustain the region's development vision, goals and aspirations.

As such, the CSTL PF provides an authoritative instruction and mandate to all Member States' Ministries of Education to improve the quality of education to achieve its transformational goals. Whilst it provides substantial direction on the measures necessary to enable the social and economic inclusion of children through the mainstreaming of their relevant socio-economic rights and services within education, it provides less guidance on the curriculum reform measures necessary to enable children to take up their civic and political responsibilities through the mainstreaming of children's civil and political rights.

To address this gap, this *Child and Youth Agency Framework for 21st Century Education (CYAF)* has been developed in order to:

- Provide concrete guidance on the standards and measures required for effective mainstreaming of children's rights, including their rights to participation in and through education
- Highlight the importance of ensuring that education reform measures initiated within the Policy Framework pay equal and focused attention to enabling children's civic and political agency
- Provide and promote the rationale for the focus on children's civil and political rights
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The CYAF is intended to guide a curriculum reform process to ensure that all the education systems in the SADC region serve their transformational purpose. In addition, it is intended to bring about a whole-system reform process to position education and the curriculum as the engine of inclusive sustainable development. It does so through the process of mainstreaming children's rights, capacities, skills and competencies necessary for their full and engaged participation in the social and economic, as well as the civil and political dimensions of society.

## Education systems: the engines of transformation

All governing instruments recognise that the attainment of sustainable, inclusive development depends on the realisation of the right to quality education for all, especially the most vulnerable children.

Treaties and development instruments recognise education as having a fundamentally transformative purpose: to prepare all children to be active agents of social, economic and political prosperity, peace and stability.

Building human capital for sustainable development requires that **every child** access and receive **quality education for agency**.

**To summarise:** Education systems must fulfil their role as engines of sustainable development by addressing barriers that exclude marginalised and vulnerable children, and delivering 21st century education that develops all children's agency to fulfil their civic responsibilities to overcome challenges to inclusive, sustainable development.

### Instruments mandating universal education for agency

- AU Agenda 2063
- AU Agenda 2040: Africa universal education for The sustainable development goals (SDGs)
- The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Policy Framework on Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL)
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)
- The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

## The responsibility to strengthen transformative, inclusive education systems for agency

In order to fulfil their mandated legal and developmental responsibilities, Member States must strengthen their education systems in two key respects:

1. Ensure that no child is excluded from education because of social, economic or any other factor – in other words, education systems must be rights-based and inclusive
2. Provide quality, relevant 21st century education that will build human capital – especially of the most marginalised and vulnerable children – through the development of child and youth agency to address key development challenges

The Member States of the SADC have taken collective action to realise this responsibility. All SADC ministries of education have endorsed the CSTL PF, and in so doing, committed to strengthening national education systems as transformational vehicles for building human capital for sustainable, inclusive development. The Policy Framework is not only a statement of commitment – it also describes the shared outcomes all Member States have agreed need to be achieved, including:

1. The adoption of special measures to address social, economic and related barriers to ensure universal access to education for all vulnerable children
2. Improvement of the quality and relevance of education to enable and empower all children to meet the demands and fulfil their responsibilities as 21st century citizens

The CSTL PF provides detailed guidelines as to the measures that should be taken by all Member States to address access barriers common across the SADC region.

Member States have implemented many of these measures in addressing social and economic access barriers, resulting in a substantial increase in education enrolment rates.

However, quality remains a concern: education systems are not adequately developing young people's agency to overcome the challenges preventing the attainment of sustainable, inclusive development in the region.

As a result, SADC Member States, along with their sub-Saharan counterparts, have made limited progress with regard to achieving key sustainable development goals, especially:

- Reducing poverty
- Reducing inequality and social, economic, civic and political exclusion of the most vulnerable, including gender- and poverty-related inequalities
- Reducing HIV&AIDS transmission rates, especially among young girls and women
- Reducing early, unintended pregnancies
- Universalising environmentally sustainable practices and reducing the risks associated with climate change

It is estimated that, by 2050, Africa will be home to one billion children. It is therefore essential that education systems be substantially strengthened to reverse the development losses and delays, and accelerate sustainable progress.

**While the CSTL PF directs that education systems must provide relevant, quality education to build human capital, it does not provide the same level of detailed guidance on the measures necessary and outcomes that should be achieved to realise this goal.**

**As an addendum to the CSTL PF, this CYAF provides guidance on the outcomes and required measures to strengthen the quality of education for the development of human capital to address the most pressing development challenges.**

## What is quality, relevant, transformative education?

It is education that develops the agency of all children to be active and engaged citizens, and to exercise their associated civic and political responsibilities and rights by participating in decision-making about their personal lives, and in their homes, schools, communities and countries, and in so doing, being agents of rights-based, sustainable, inclusive development.

Just as all development treaties recognise children as the foundation of sustainable development, they equally recognise that education systems are largely responsible for developing children's agency and civic competencies. They obligate the education systems of the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) and other regions to develop and implement 21st century curricula for the provision of inclusive education that builds the human capital required to sustain inclusive development. This requires the development of inclusive, transformative education systems that enable, empower and compel children's civic agency through developing the prescribed suite of knowledge, competencies and capacities. In addition to developing their social and economic rights and responsibilities, their civic and political rights and responsibilities must also be

developed to enable children to become active and engaged citizens and leaders, which is a precondition for rights-based, sustainable and inclusive development.

Children's civil and political rights are recognised by legal instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Convention on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The rights-based, sustainable development agenda, as documented in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's Agenda 2063, recognises the universalisation of these rights as a foundational building block of inclusive sustainable development. They are foundational because the permanent attainment of the SDGs and Africa Agenda's goals (eliminating poverty and inequality, and fostering peaceful and democratic societies) requires inclusive economic growth, sustainable environments, healthy populations, and tolerant and peaceful democratic societies. This in turn is fundamentally dependent on children. Specifically, it depends on children fulfilling their assigned roles as active and engaged citizens who drive the changes through their own behaviour, in their homes, schools, communities and workplaces, that will sustain the intended outcomes to bring an end to poverty, inequality and conflict in the region. And this in turn depends on the recognition and realisation of children's civic and political rights. For children to be agents of sustainable development they must be enabled, empowered and encouraged to fulfil their responsibilities as active and engaged citizens and leaders through the exercise of their civil and political rights, including their rights to participate, to voice their opinions, to associate freely with others and to access information.

The education system is a key role player in advancing Africa's biggest asset – its human capital residing in its projected one billion children (by 2050). It is responsible for adopting and advancing an effective national child rights governance system. In addition, it is duty-bound to establish systems to ensure the development of the agency of every child – notably the most marginalised – through developing their capacity, and creating opportunities for them to participate as engaged citizens in decisions that affect them – in all aspects of society – including decisions that they and their peers make, and those made by their families, schools and governments.

## What is learner agency?

**Learner agency is the power to exercise civil and political rights and responsibilities to change one's environment and address challenges in and through education.** It requires education systems to ensure that all learners have the knowledge, capacity, skills and competencies to exercise their agency within the school setting and more broadly in society. Learner agency is the power of learners to be the agents of change they want to see by taking meaningful and informed action to pursue the results they would like to see. GELP (2017) defines learner agency as follows:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> GELP. 2017. *Transforming education for complexity: why, what and how*. Report on GELP Moscow 2017 Conference Results. Moscow: GELP, Global Education Futures, Global Venture Alliance: 30.

### **Learner agency is ...**

The capacity to behave as purposeful, reflective and responsible social beings, exercising choice, actively seeking to achieve goals which have been understood and endorsed. Learner agency is a foundation of the capacity to cope with strategic uncertainty and transformations of the complex society.

[It] includes three components: **ownership** (teaching and learning processes which build self-efficacy), **leadership** (processes which give students the opportunity to lead the direction of change) and **voice** (processes that increase student influence over their learning environment). These dimensions of student agency can be exercised across multiple levels of the system: in the classroom, in the school, and in a larger learning ecosystem. It is essential that student agency begins in the class and becomes an indispensable element of the curriculum.

## Gaps and challenges preventing the realisation of the aims of 21st century education

Education systems do not generally prepare children to meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities of the 21st century. Education systems, including those in Africa, have tended to respond to the outdated needs and challenges of the last century and, rather than serving to drive and sustain development, have perpetuated poverty and inequities among historically marginalised communities.<sup>2</sup> There are many reasons, but at the heart of the problem is the poor quality of education, especially for the most vulnerable, which does not prepare children for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.<sup>3</sup>

While quality of education has come under the spotlight and is increasingly recognised as key to achieving the broad aims of education, the focus has been on the quality of traditional learning outcomes such as maths and science literacy and technological competencies. However, there has been little focus on the relevance and quality of education to achieve its broader transformational goals, the achievement of which generally has not been assessed or benchmarked within international or regional systems-strengthening and -monitoring initiatives.

Nevertheless, there is a growing awareness of the limitations of outdated education systems, especially within the sustainable development framework. Several countries, including those in Africa, have engaged in curriculum reform and review processes to modernise their education systems to better prepare children for the 21st century. Yet while a review of the revised curriculum frameworks shows some progress has been made, the reforms generally have often not been adequate to drive the transformation needed for achieving rights-based sustainable development.

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<sup>2</sup> African Union. n.d. *Africa's Agenda for Children 2040: Fostering an Africa fit for children*.

<sup>3</sup> SADC and MIET Africa. 2012. *CSTL Regional Report. A Review of Care and Support for Teaching and Learning in the SADC Region*. MIET Africa.

A critical gap in this regard is the failure to recognise children's agency and the importance of their civil and political rights. This has resulted in the neglect, within reform processes, of measures to realise children's civil and political rights in and through the education system.

For many of the countries that have engaged in and with 21st century reform, their emphasis falls on social and economic rights and preparing children for engaging in the 21st century workplace and economy. The focus of reforms is thus, for the most part, on enabling the skills and content knowledge children need to participate in an information-based economy, with little attention paid to their civic and political engagement.

**The failure to recognise and advance children's civil and political rights in and through education systems will frustrate the realisation of the aims of education, it will prevent education systems from honouring their commitments and fulfilling their responsibilities, and ultimately undermine sustainable development.**

**Sustainable development is fueled by inclusive growth. This depends not only on equitable and meaningful access to, or inclusion in, the economy and services such as health, but also on equitable and meaningful access to and inclusion in, civic and political engagement by all, including children, people with disabilities, women and those living in poverty.**

**Education systems must, to fulfil their developmental potential and responsibilities, be reviewed and strengthened so as to recognise, protect and promote children's agency through the mainstreaming of the realisation of their civil and political rights in and through education.**

However, while the national curriculum frameworks and supporting systems in the region commit to developing the civic and political agency of children (alongside their social and economic agency), the focus has remained on preparing children for economic participation in the 21st century. There is limited systematisation of the development of children's civil and political agency necessary for them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as active and engaged citizens and leaders in the 21st century – in their homes, schools, communities and countries.

Thus, the duty and potential of education systems to build the foundations of rights-based, sustainable development – *children engaged as citizens in democratic, inclusive, child-sensitive governance that shapes decisions that affect them* – remains unrealised.

While education systems have dedicated resources to educating children to overcome these challenges for more than 10 years, little progress has been made. Our research has shown that limited development of youth agency by the education system is at the core of the persistence of the critical development challenges of high levels of adolescent and youth HIV transmission particularly among young girls, teen pregnancies, gender inequality and climate change. MIET AFRICA has, in partnership with Save the Children ESA region and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), undertaken to implement two integrated initiatives (FoRCESA and FutureLife-Now!) to strengthen education systems across the region to develop the agency of all children to become effective agents of lasting change, equipped with the knowledge, competencies and capacities they need to permanently change their own, their peers', their families', communities' and countries' values, attitudes and practices to overcome these and any future development challenges.

## Road map for developing transformational education systems

To assist Ministries of Education to lead the process of strengthening their education systems, this *Child and Youth Agency Framework (CYAF)* provides guidance on reforming the curriculum and related policies and practices to cultivate an inclusive, 21st century teaching and learning environment capable of developing children's agency to overcome the current challenges such as high HIV rates, teen pregnancies, gender inequality and climate change.

Two key features of the CSTL PF as a vehicle for developing transformational education systems are:

1. The commitment to developing a quality, inclusive national curriculum framework that is relevant for the 21st century and that will achieve the required outcomes, including the development of children's civic and political agency
2. The recognition that the education system is not limited to schools, but includes a wide spectrum of educational platforms where children learn, and that education is provided by an interrelating continuum of co-educators, including parents in the home, peers in communities and schools, formal educators in schools, the media, health care providers, social service providers, community members, traditional and religious leaders, human rights institutes, and political leaders

The CSTL PF and this supporting CYAF provide a road map for developing CSTL schools as facilitative hubs of this extended educational ecosystem that secures a common recognition and commitment by all co-educators and supportive institutional arrangements to fulfil the shared responsibility to provide quality education for agency.

It is an implicit requirement of the CSTL PF that all SADC education systems be strengthened to be educational ecosystems that provide a 21st century curriculum for the development of agency through CSTL schools as the central facilitative hubs. This requires that all national education systems mainstream the realisation of children's agency as a core educational outcome, and that the national education systems empower all co-educators to commit to their complementary responsibilities to provide education for agency.

Many SADC Member States have developed 21st century, competency-based curriculum frameworks that explicitly recognise and commit to advancing, not only the social and economic competencies, but also the civic and political competencies needed to develop children's agency to be drivers of sustainable change.

However, there is limited implementation of the commitment to advance children's civic responsibilities and participation rights. As a result, children's agency is not being developed.

To achieve the transformative purpose of education, children's civil and political rights and responsibilities must be mainstreamed in the curriculum. The curriculum must, in its design and outcomes, ensure a rights-based, child-centred 21st century teaching and learning environment that equips children with the necessary knowledge and civil and political competencies and skills to be agents of sustainable development. To achieve this, their civil and political rights and responsibilities must be mainstreamed within the system through their integration into all components of the education system, including its:

- Teaching content
- Pedagogy

- Teaching and learning environment, including infrastructure and teaching and learning support materials
- Educator qualifications, qualities, attitudes and practices
- Policies and values governing relationships at all levels of the system, including with schools, parents and communities
- Decision-making, leadership and governance policies, practices and institutions

**To summarise:** To fulfil their developmental potential and responsibilities, education systems must be reviewed and strengthened so as to recognise, protect and promote children’s agency through mainstreaming the realisation of their civil and political rights in and through education.

## Achieving the legally and developmentally prescribed aims of education through 21st century education systems

From the above, it is clear that education systems have the responsibility to drive transformation to secure inclusive and sustainable rights-based development. To do so, they must be inclusive of all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. Furthermore, they must recognise, protect and promote children’s agency by providing quality teaching and learning that prepares children to meet the social, economic and political opportunities and challenges of a 21st century democratic development state.

Read together, the human rights treaties and development charters clearly define the responsibilities on education systems. Education systems must advance children’s agency by ensuring that their civil and political rights are embedded within the very fabric of education and define and shape every aspect of the education system.

**Ensuring children’s agency is the foundation of a human-rights-based society and education system. It requires that education advances children’s rights, including their civil and political rights.**

Human rights education requires that education systems **empower** children with knowledge and **enable** the exercise of their civil and political rights. It requires not just that children be taught about their rights, but that the education system, at all levels, should reflect child rights principles and practices in children’s daily experience of education.<sup>4</sup> Human rights education requires more than formal teaching; it requires the ‘promotion of values and policies conducive to human rights not only within schools but also within the broader community’.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, rights such as the right to participate in decisions that affect them, to have and voice an opinion, to associate freely with others, and to have access to information systems, should be an integral and defining feature not only of the curriculum, but also of the processes and structures of the education system – the pedagogical methods, the environment in which education takes place, and the manner in which decisions are made.

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<sup>4</sup> GC1. Para 15.

<sup>5</sup> GC1. Para 19.

## System-wide transformation to support the realisation of children's agency

To achieve this, education systems must mainstream and integrate children's civil and political rights and responsibilities, through a comprehensive curriculum that prepares all children for meaningful participation in the social, cultural, economic, civil and political spheres of a 21st century society.

To do this, education systems must ensure the development and exercise of children's knowledge, skills, capacities and competencies to exercise all their rights, especially their civil and political rights, including:

- Knowledge of their rights and responsibilities
- Knowledge of 21st century development challenges and solutions, including children's responsibilities to be engaged citizens
- Knowledge of how society and political arrangements work
- Access to information from a diversity of sources on a comprehensive range of subjects, especially those impacting on development
- The ability to use information effectively to identify and solve problems, engage in evidence-based planning, communications for change and advocacy, and provide leadership for developing and implementing interventions, as well as to participate effectively in decision-making processes and influence decisions
- Critical reasoning
- Conflict management
- The ability to make rational choices, as well as understand the consequences of their choices
- Tolerance of difference
- Freedom of expression and opinion
- Communication skills

Education systems must develop these skills and competencies to support the evolution of children's capacities to participate in all decisions that affect them.

This in turn requires education systems to provide a rights-based, child-centred 21st century teaching and learning environment that secures their social and economic, as well as their civil and political knowledge, competencies, skills and outcomes, through their integration into all components of the education system.

## SADC CSTL Policy Framework: a vehicle for transformation of education systems to develop agency for sustainable development

How can we mobilise required education and curriculum reform across the region?

The *SADC Policy Framework for Care and Support for Teaching and Learning* (CSTL PF) provides an ideal advocacy and planning vehicle for driving the transformation of education systems in the SADC region to fulfil their transformational purpose by mainstreaming children's civil and political rights across all elements of the system.

There are significant synergies in the aim of the CSTL PF, the rights-based, sustainable development 21st century education agenda. They share the same vision, goal and objectives to strengthen education systems to enable learners to drive sustainable development. Moreover, they share the same whole-systems approach and call for the strengthening of rights-based foundations, including the civil and political rights of children, across all elements of the education system.

The CSTL PF provides an authoritative directive for the transformation of education systems across the SADC region across the same platforms as identified in the 21st century education framework, namely:

- Curriculum
- Educator qualities and development
- Pedagogy
- Infrastructure
- Teaching and learning resources
- Relationships with the community
- Leadership and governance

The CSTL PF recognises the rights-based foundations of the required reform but does not provide sufficient guidance in terms of the changes and outcomes required across the platforms to secure children's agency through the realisation of their civil and political rights.

Therefore, this *CSTL Child and Youth Agency Framework* (CYAF) has been developed to provide a mandate and direction on the reforms required across the essential elements of CSTL to achieve the aims of 21st century education.

# Implementation of the Child and Youth Agency Framework

## Vision

All education systems in the SADC region provide 21st century teaching and learning for the development of the agency of every child – social, economic, civic and political to empower them to be actively engaged as citizens who drive and sustain inclusive, sustainable development by making decisions and acting to bring a permanent end to regional development challenges.

Special measures will ensure the inclusion and empowerment of the most vulnerable and marginalised children, so that they become engaged citizens with the agency to drive inclusive development.

## Goal

To ensure that all SADC Ministries of Education apply the *SADC CSTL Policy Framework* to strengthen the quality of education. Specifically, that a CSTL-sensitive 21st century curriculum develops the capacities, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of learners, necessary for them to fulfil their responsibilities as *active and engaged* citizens in the 21st century.

## Objectives

The objectives of this *Child and Youth Agency Framework* are:

1. To secure agreement among SADC Member States and their Ministries of Education of the importance of transforming the education system and prioritising whole-system curriculum reform aimed at building the civil and political capacities and competencies of learners to achieve the developmental aims of education
2. To secure a common understanding of what is required, across all components of the education system, to achieve the aim and potential of education to graduate responsibly engaged citizens active in the civic and political life of their schools, communities and governments
3. To foster an understanding of what is required to secure an education system that enables children's agency through the cultivation of their knowledge and exercise of their civil and political rights
4. To provide policy statements necessary to create an enabling learning environment that recognises, protects and promotes children's civil and political rights
5. To provide benchmarks against which Member States can measure their progress
6. To define the role of the education and other sectors in the design and delivery of the envisaged transformational education system
7. To serve as an advocacy tool to strengthen the realisation of children's civil and political rights, notably their right to participate in all decisions that affect them, in and through the education system

## Guiding principles

The framework is guided by the following principles:

- Rights-based, inclusive development
- Transformative education
- Learner agency
- A whole-system and integrated approach
- Sustainability

## Policy statements and guidelines for implementing focus areas

To achieve the aims of education to drive sustainable development, children's civic responsibilities and associated rights must be cultivated through education. This means that the latter must be mainstreamed across the education system through planning, implementation and monitoring of a 21st century-learning-sensitive package of care and support for teaching and learning that enables and empowers all learners – including the most marginalised – to know, understand and exercise their civil and political responsibilities and rights.

This section of the framework requires that all SADC Member States, acting through their Ministries of Education, improve the quality of their education systems. By engaging in a process of review and reform of their holistic curriculum, and ensuring that it is inclusive and relevant, the transformational aims of education can be achieved. This requires the development of a caring and supportive teaching and learning environment where the CSTL pillars, as described in the CSTL PF, are implemented to enable and empower every learner, especially the most vulnerable, to be active and engaged agents and participants in the inclusive and sustained development of their schools, communities and countries. This must be achieved through the recognition, respect and promotion of their rights, including their civil and political rights, in the vision, goal, objectives, policy statements and guidelines under each of the CSTL pillars.

This supplementary framework provides guidance on the required agency outcomes and how to achieve these through five areas of focus, each with a detailed policy statement. Additional attention is paid to the curriculum focus area because of its centrality to the transformational purpose of education.

## Focus Area 1: Curriculum support

### The centrality of curriculum to the achievement of the CSTL transformative agenda

CSTL is a vehicle for ensuring educational inclusion as the bedrock of sustainable inclusive development. Educational exclusion has two dimensions: The first relates to **physical access**. The most vulnerable children are often out of school because of socio-economic barriers such as gender, poverty, disability, and ethnic origin. However, addressing only this level of access is insufficient. There is a second element educational exclusion – the **quality of education** received to equalise the children's opportunities to engage in economic, social and civic activities on an equal footing. Once in school, vulnerable children are at great risk of receiving poor-quality education and achieving poor educational outcomes. For example, children from poorer homes

in most OECD countries are between three and four times more likely to be among the poorest scorers in maths at age 15, and many vulnerable children leave school without the basic knowledge, skills and competencies they need for work and life in the 21st century. 'Achieving the necessary reading and mathematical skills is often especially difficult for migrants and minorities, who often lose out on both fronts – lower performance and low socio-economic background.'<sup>6</sup>

If this quality element of exclusion is not addressed, the aims of education will not be achieved and historical patterns of social, economic and political exclusion will be perpetuated.<sup>7</sup> The curriculum is the foundation of any education system and the key to addressing this second element of educational exclusion, and is therefore a foundational priority of the CSTL PF.

The curriculum is 'a road map for achieving socially agreed development and education goals'.<sup>8</sup> As such, it is central to achieving the inclusive developmental aim of education, and is the foundation for achieving CSTL's vision, goal and objectives.

The curriculum is not just the learning areas or content covered in classrooms. It encompasses the comprehensive, intersecting components of the whole education system, all of which must work together to achieve the aims of the education system.

The curriculum directs the education system and determines the content, quality, relevance, inclusion, teaching and learning practices and assessments, and is structured around the education system's vision. It is the vehicle by which planning, resourcing, implementation and assessment of the learning environment are driven and guided to achieve the overarching vision or aim of education. It is the foundation of an effective education system and determines if, collectively across all platforms, the system can achieve its educational aims. In a nutshell, it is 'the systemic collection of the what, the why, the when, and the how learning takes place in a particular context'.<sup>9</sup>

### Vision and goal of an inclusive CSTL curriculum

The CSTL curriculum vision and goal is thus that every child in the SADC region benefits equally from an accessible, age-appropriate, quality, relevant education that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and opportunities required to develop their agency and contribute positively to and sustain economic and social development, environmental sustainability, social justice, political stability and good governance.

The goal of the CYAF is that all education systems in the SADC regional provide a 21st century, competency-based curriculum that is delivered in an enabling, supportive and nurturing teaching and learning environment that ensures that all vulnerable and marginalised children acquire the competencies, knowledge and skills they need to be active and engaged citizens and contribute

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<sup>6</sup> OECD. 2008. *Policy brief: Ten steps to equity in education*. <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/39989494.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO. 2018. *Comparative analysis of National Curriculum Frameworks of Five Countries: Brazil, Cambodia, Finland, Kenya and Peru*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

to the sustainable development, social justice, peace, and good governance of their families, schools, communities, societies and the country.

## Policy statement

Every Member State should develop, or where one exists, review, its Curriculum Framework to identify the development of agency as an explicit educational priority, and defines and mandates the development, resourcing and implementation of a curriculum that will provide the agency formula of knowledge, development of skills and competencies and the creation of opportunities for children to develop and exercise their agency.

The national curriculum framework should:

1. Define the aim of the education system to develop the agency of all children, especially the most marginalised, to be engaged and contributing citizens in a 21st century developmental state by enabling and empowering them to participate in, contribute to, and sustain economic, social, cultural and political life in a constructive, peaceful and meaningful way
2. Further describe the defining features of the various components of the education system so that they may be planned, implemented and monitored to work synergistically to realise the aims of the education system, including the civic and political aims of education
3. Describe the desired education outcomes of a transformative system as well as the competencies, skills, attributes and knowledge that children should acquire to be active and engaged citizens in democratic and peaceful 21st century settings
4. Indicate that to prepare learners to be active and engaged citizens in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life, the education system must support the evolution of their capacities to be active, engaged citizens
5. Specify the knowledge, competencies, skills, and opportunities children need to develop their agency:

The Curriculum Framework should identify the associated curriculum content and learning areas, as well as the supporting teaching methodologies to cultivate the skills required. Teaching content should expressly include civil and political rights, information about society, democracy and political processes, as well as subject areas such as maths, science and languages.

6. Make explicit the necessary **learning areas and content** to develop learner agency, including:
  - a. Subject knowledge relating to the relevant development challenge, including:
    - Information, statistics and evidence
    - Laws governing rights and responsibilities pertaining to the development challenge
    - Associated role players and their rights and responsibilities
    - Processes/platforms where decisions are made and role players held accountable
    - Complaints mechanisms
  - b. Competencies and skills to retrieve, analyse and use information for change:
    - Research
    - Analysis

- Evidence-based planning
  - Project management
  - Advocacy skills
  - Writing skills
  - Conflict resolution skills
- c. Opportunities to act – to use the knowledge and skills to develop and exercise agency for change, including opportunities to:
- Use the evidence to identify problems in schools, communities, families and country
  - Develop evidence-based projects to address causes
  - Develop and implement behaviour change campaigns
  - Raise resources and coordinate campaigns
  - Make submissions to government/UN/AU to influence laws
  - Write reports on status and recommendations
7. Specify that teaching methodologies, teacher attitudes and teaching and learning materials must support the development of agency by integrating all three components (ownership, leadership and voice) of education for agency into the routine teaching and learning processes by, for example:
- a. Providing access to up-to-date, relevant information from a diversity of sources
  - b. Creating opportunities to practise and develop their competencies, to contribute to their communities – at school, local and national level – and to develop a sense of responsibility and tolerance, for example, through peer groups, child-led associations and similar structures
  - c. Cultivating skills and competencies such as accessing and using information from a diversity of sources for evidence-based reasoning; analysis; recognition of consequences, and tolerance of opposing views, etc.
  - d. Facilitating dialogue between learners and educators in the design and development of the learning process
  - e. The practical application of theories and skills: teaching methodologies, extracurricular activities and governance arrangements should enable children to put their learning into practice as active citizens of the school community through, for example:
    - Debate as a teaching methodology
    - School newspapers
    - Peer support groups
    - Establishing democratic and inclusive school governance institutions for planning and decision-making, including the review and planning of the curriculum framework to include children
8. Define and describe assessment standards and procedures for monitoring progress in acquiring agency and the three constituent components (ownership, leadership and voice), and should include:

- a. Indicators and appropriate assessment procedures for assessing the acquisition by learners of knowledge of their civil and political rights in a democratic context; the skills, values, attitudes and competencies needed to exercise these; and the successful application of the theory learned through school extracurricular and governance practices
  - b. Learner assessments and progression policies that are competency-based: each learner should be supported through a combination of formative and summative assessments of progress made by each learner in acquiring 21st century competencies
9. Describe the continuum of co-educators and educator qualifications, attributes, knowledge and skills required to implement the defined education curriculum (more detailed guidance is provided under the pillar: teacher support)
  10. Describe infrastructure or learning environment requirements to support the cultivation of 21st century learning outcomes (more detailed guidance is provided under the Focus Area: infrastructure)
  11. Define the relationships that should be cultivated and maintained between schools, the education system and families and communities to establish the necessary educational ecosystems made up of a continuum of co-educators who must collaborate in the provision of education for agency (more detailed guidance is provided under the Focus Area: community involvement)
  12. Define the inclusive and democratic governance and leadership arrangements required of a transformative education system and school (more detailed guidance is provided under the Focus Area: leadership and governance)

## Focus Area 2: Teacher development and support

### Policy statement

Ministries of Education are required to mobilise a continuum of co-educators made up of teachers, parents, learners, supporting government ministries, learners and community leaders responsible for providing education for agency. Teachers alone cannot and should not provide the education for agency formula. They do not and cannot be expected to have all required knowledge, skills, competencies and networks necessary to provide the agency formula. Moreover, education must be continued across the learning continuum – from home, to school, to community, to media and more broadly.

Ministries of Education must mobilise, capacitate and support all co-educators to recognise and fulfil their responsibilities through schools as facilitative hubs of 21st century education for agency.

They must support teachers and co-educators be 21st century educators who facilitates the acquisition and use of the knowledge acquired by learners to build their competencies to be engaged citizens and exercise their civil and political rights and responsibilities. Specifically, they should be supported to:

1. Provide the holistic and diverse teaching children need in order to know and exercise their civil and political rights
2. Develop child-centered, participatory and practice-oriented teaching methods and attitudes
3. Encourage, and be tolerant of, a diversity of views and opinions and actively seek these out in the process of teaching. This should be done through:

- a. Pre- and in-service training and continuing professional development
  - b. The development of schools as hubs of learning supported by effective networks of educators outside of the formal education system
  - c. Monitoring and ongoing mentoring and support
  - d. Providing access to supportive teaching and learning resources
4. Every teacher must be supported to become a skilled facilitator, caring mentor, life-long learner and exemplary professional and role model through:
- a. Receipt of pre- and annual in-service training of all teachers on the 21st century curriculum
  - b. Support and training for understanding and applying a learner-centred approach to teaching, including the identification of every learner's needs, including special needs, and interests and how to respond to these in the classroom with additional support and competency-based assessments
  - c. Review and revision of teacher training curricula to advance 21st century teaching skills and competencies
  - d. Ongoing teacher assessments for the purpose of ongoing development of teacher skills and competencies
  - e. Establishing professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices, and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice

### Focus Area 3: Infrastructure and teaching and learning resources

#### Policy statement

Ministries of Education must develop and adopt policies and programmes to create an enabling teaching and learning environment made up of appropriate infrastructure and supported by appropriate teaching and learning materials necessary to enable children's civic agency and participation and realise their civil and political rights and the capacities needed to exercise these effectively and peacefully.

The infrastructure policies and programmes should do the following:

1. Secure a rich mix of media and devices, varied cultures, and virtual and real-life relationships:
 

In today's interconnected and technology-driven world, a learning environment need not be a physical place, but can be virtual, online, remote. 21st century learning environments can be seen as the support systems that organise the condition in which humans learn best – systems that accommodate the unique learning needs of every learner and support the positive human relationships required for effective learning. Learning environments are the structures, tools, and communities that inspire students and educators to attain the knowledge and skills the 21st century demands of us all.
2. Support open dialogue and access to relevant and up-to-date information, as well as facilitating connections with broader social and political dialogue spaces
3. Foster learning spaces that 'promote interaction and a sense of community [that] enable formal and informal learning'
4. Support professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices, and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice

5. Enable students to learn in relevant, real-world 21st century contexts (for example, through project-based or other applied work)
6. Allow equitable access to quality learning tools, technologies, and resources
7. Provide 21st century architectural and interior designs for group, team, and individual learning
8. Support expanded community involvement in learning, both face-to-face and online
9. Be designed inclusively with the input of learners, parents and communities
10. Secure environmentally sustainable and friendly infrastructure
11. Convert libraries into media centres offering access to a diversity of sources and platforms of information as well the space for quiet reflection, debate and reading
12. Provide access to digital tools and media-rich resources:

Educators need access to tools and resources to share knowledge and methods with other professionals, interact with experts in their field, and connect with their students as well as 'families and communities. Administrators need access to these same tools and resources to manage the complexities of the educational enterprise – from student records and performance data, to personnel management and facilities operations. A robust infrastructure, designed for flexibility and growth, can facilitate these connections – and more'.<sup>10</sup>

## Focus Area 4: Community involvement

A vibrant and dynamic relationship between the school and community is key to the success of 21st century learning. Schools should become ecosystems of learning whereby they serve as a conduit for sharing 21st century competencies and skills among learners, parents and caregivers and communities. Children learn and practise what they learn in and outside of school, through the support provided by their parents, caregivers and communities.

Schools should be networked within communities and broader society to link learners (and educators) with a diversity of educators in formal and informal education spaces.

### Policy statement

Ministries of Education must support schools to become the facilitators of teaching and learning by establishing them as ecosystems of learning. They must enable schools to establish collaborative partnerships that will secure access through schools to a diversity of formal and informal teachers, teaching and knowledge necessary for children to know, understand and practise their civil and political rights.

This will require the building of partnerships and opening of schools to partnerships with a variety of external role-players such as:

- The media
- Electoral commissions
- Political parties and politicians

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<sup>10</sup> *Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environments.*  
[http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/le\\_white\\_paper-1.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/le_white_paper-1.pdf)

- NGOs
- Human rights organisations and institutes
- Supporting government ministries
- Community leaders.

Ministries of Education should therefore mandate, enable and support schools to:

1. Build a network of supportive educators drawn from the school community, including:
  - Businesses and business associations
  - The media
  - Electoral commissions
  - Political parties and politicians
  - NGOs
  - Child-led organisations
  - Human rights organisations and institutes
2. Facilitate annual workshops to educate and inform parents and caregivers on 21st century learning and the curriculum, and build partnerships with them as co-educators who will create an enabling and supportive home environment where they can exercise and grow their 21st century skills

## Focus Area 5: Governance and leadership

School leadership and governance is critical to the success of 21st century learning. Child/learner-centered teaching and learning requires that children participate, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in decisions about their teaching and learning environment.

The vision for an inclusive education system is that the education system and every school have inclusive governing bodies responsible for planning and decision-making on teaching and learning, including planning of the curriculum framework. This process should include children, parents and representatives from the communities. The learners represented should include a proportion of vulnerable or historically marginalised learners.

### Policy statement

Ministries of Education should:

1. Lead the transformation of the education system by reviewing and revising the national CSTL model to include the goals, policy aspirations and outcomes envisaged in this framework
2. Review and revise school governance laws, policies and institutions to:
  - a. Ensure that governance structures include children as well as representatives from the extended community of learning
  - b. Define and prescribe children's roles and mandates, as well as the role and mandate of the extended community of learning
3. Strengthen the country's National Coordinating Unit by:

- a. Ensuring representation by the extended learning community and children
  - b. Making the education system's curriculum division or directorate one of the structure's co-chairs
4. Identify and embed 21st century learning indicators in the CSTL monitoring and evaluation framework at SADC and Member State levels
  5. Build partnerships and encourage children's participation advocacy groups to adopt CSTL as an advocacy vehicle for the advancement of children's civil and political rights